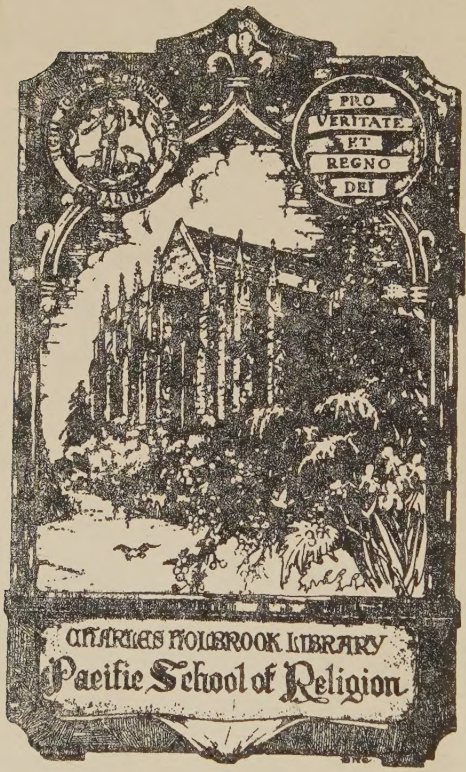
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The Theosophical FORUM

MAY 1902

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NOTICE.

We are asked to say that *Miss E. M. Colcord, 816 K. Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.,* has duplicate numbers of THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM of the following dates: May, June, July, August, September, October and November, 1896; January to August inclusive, of 1897; April, May and June, of 1898. Miss Colcord is willing to send any of these to those of our readers who have incomplete sets, on receipt of the postage needed to carry them.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

VOL. 8. MAY, 1902 No. 1

* * *

"Wait, and while you are waiting, observe, pray, and neglect no labour. However small or trifling it may seem, if true, and performed in the spirit of consecration, it is worth the doing. So life becomes luminous and the tangles straighten out. And the complex becomes simple."

"Never mistrust nor suspect any one. If you are deceived, God will reward you by giving of your goodness to the offender. So that in time he will repent and change."

"The experiences of life come slowly, one by one, each carrying its lesson and its promise, will you but receive them. These are the true mile-stones, not the years; and a man's age must be reckoned in terms of feeling and knowledge. He has drunk of the Fountain of Youth, who having known, felt, and experienced all, still retains his freshness of heart, and who meets death with the dew of the morning on his face. For such there is no death; and of such children is in truth the 'kingdom of heaven.'"

"Hold yourself ready always to surrender everything—Love, yes; you should never cease from loving, but do not permit the tendrils of your heart to be so entwined about anything in your life or circumstances that you are not ready instantly and courageously to surrender it when the demand is made. The human heart must not be dulled nor inured by pain; do not let your shrinking from the trials put upon you tempt you to this idea. You are not to feel *less,* but *more.* Not to suffer *less,* but *more.* You are to perfect your endurance and learn to absolutely surrender your heart and will in the moment of keenest agony."

CAVÉ.

"BIRTH A NEW CHANCE."

Something less than a year ago, we introduced our readers to a new and very striking work on "Cosmic Consciousness," by a writer who did not know himself to be a Theosophist, though putting forward ideas and principles which have been taught by Theosophists for centuries. The study of this work brought us a threefold gain: We were encouraged and cheered by finding the open and alert mind of an original genius, using materials and devising methods purely his own, led by the sure logic of fact to embrace our own conclusions; secondly, we were led to mark and ponder on the differences which existed between the new work and our own thought; and, thirdly, as a result of this, we were led to see what exactly our own conclusions are, and why we hold them.

We may reach this threefold gain in an equally striking measure, by considering another quite original and independent work, this time entitled "Birth a New Chance," by Rev. Columbus Bradford. Its author, working in solitude, and hardly dreaming that anyone else had suspected the truths which he came to perceive, has by slow and laborious research and thought deduced the teaching of Reincarnation from the Bible, and the work under notice embodies his ideas and conclusions. Our author believes that he found the teaching of Reincarnation tacitly or openly present in the Bible, and that he worked it out in a natural and logical way. It seems to us, however, that he really found the teaching in the back of his own mind, where it had lain safely hidden from a former birth; and that he would have "discovered" the teaching in whatever system he happened to take up. Yet the idea that this teaching of Reincarnation can be found in the Bible by one who knew nothing of it from other systems, cannot fail to give many minds an intellectual stimulus of great value, waking up many who could be touched in no other way. The very materialism of the present work, if we may call it so, will make it intelligible to many whose minds fail to grasp the more abstract thought of the old Wisdom Religion.

Our readers will find a great deal of pleasure in following the novel and striking thought of this new work; they will also have an opportunity to note many points where our author reaches conclusions not quite the same as their own. This will give them an

admirable chance to consider what views they do in fact hold, and why they hold them.

It may interest our readers to know that the author of the work under review has recently been tried, and found guilty of heresy, by the authorities of his church, who punished him for his views in the only way in their power: by compelling him to give up his ministry. That Reincarnation should have its martyrs is altogether well; that one of these should be punished for finding Reincarnation in the Bible, is matter for great congratulation; and all those who hold that this teaching is vital, should thank the persecutors of this new "heresy," who thus do more than most of us to disseminate the truth they seek to suppress.

The passages that follow are the author's own account of his work:—

1. The human race is a growing race, in process of rising from animalhood to angelhood.

2. Man's so-called "fall" was in reality not so much a fall as a failure to rise, when he had evolved to that plane from which he might have risen rapidly.

3. Though his race has risen slowly, it is as a whole higher to-day, physically, morally, and spiritually, than at any time in its history.

4. Man dies, not because he sinned, but because he was made to die.

5. He was made to die because it was known to a certainty before he was created that he would sin.

6. But it has been designed from the beginning that man shall cease from dying when he quits sinning, and otherwise proves worthy of living forever.

7. Whatever of a Paradise or Eden he may have had before his fall, he can never have any higher heaven than this earth till he quits dying.

8. To live is to live, and to be dead is to be dead. When a human being consciously dwells in a vital organism, called a body, he is alive. When his body collapses and dissolves, he is dead, and remains dead till he lives again in a new, organized vital body.

9. The common belief that the dead are more alive than the living is a heathen fancy, wholly unwaranted by the Bible. Jesus

and Paul, the world's greatest authorities on the subject, called death a sleep.

10. The sleep of Death, like perfect "natural sleep," is a purely subjective state, cutting off completely the dead person's consciousness of his relationship to this objective, material universe. One in such a state can therefore never know whether one is in the body or out of the body, beneath the clods or above the clouds.

11. The human personality, whether called the soul or the spirit, does not go out of the body at death, but retreats within the body, back into the germ from which that body grew, and from which, provided the "deeds done in the body" were not such as to destroy its vitality, there is ground to infer that another body will grow.

12. This germ, or seed, into which the soul retreats at death answers well to the Apostle Paul's metaphor (1 Cor. xv. 37) of the "bare grain," which, he declares, is the only part of the body that is buried that will be in the new body when the dead person lives again.

13. Since an immaterial soul does not require a given amount of space for its operations, it can retain its subjective consciousness in an atom of matter in the earth, and be there as happy or as miserable as it could be in a floating film above the clouds.

14. The short stay of Jesus in this subjective state which he entered by dying, and which he called Paradise, proves that there is no object in long remaining in the realm of the dead, and that to live again on earth in a new physical organism is better for human development and happiness than a protracted repose in Paradise.

15. But, since the only means of emerging from the subjective state of death into this objective life in a body is resurrection or birth; since resurrections in our race history have been very few and births very many; since all who die go into a subjective realm, and all who are born come out of a subjective realm, we are warranted in asking if there is not somewhere evidence that it is the same individuals who are successively dying and being born.

16. If we are to believe that God has any design for our race as a race in this world, as everything visible clearly indicates, we know that he is either bringing back by birth the same individuals

who have lived here before and died, or creating new ones by birth to take the places of the dead. There are abundant reasons for believing he is bringing back the same persons again and again, and next to none for the belief that all who are born now are newly created. There is better ground, therefore, for believing that we shall live again on this earth after death than for the belief that we shall go at once to some other world to live.

17. A place that is good enough for God's creatures to live one time is good enough for them to live a second time, a third time, or a thousand times, if so many times are needed to exhaust the possibilities of that place for human development. There is no more reason for believing that God intends his human creatures to live in a different world when they live again than for believing that he intends them to move into a different house after each night's sleep.

18. Again, a means and a method good enough to be employed by an All-Wise Creator to bring us into life once is good enough to be used in bringing us back to life a second time, a third time, or a thousand times, if so many times are needed to accomplish all the original purposes of birth and death.

19. Furthermore, it is absolutely necessary for all the dead whose bodies have decayed to be born again at least once in order to get in reach of any resurrection power ever brought to our knowledge. None of the dead, except those in undecayed bodies, have ever arisen.

20. There is no record in the Bible or elsewhere of any such thing as a sudden fiat resurrection of a body out of scattered dust, nor is there anywhere the slightest hint that any such resurrection is ever to take place.

21. If the Creator had purposed to resurrect all the dead in that way at the last day, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have so directed events and influences as to allow the body of Jesus to be cremated, and then on the third day would have resurrected that body complete from its ashes. But his Divine Providence seemed specially engaged to prevent its cremation, since that would naturally have been the method employed by the Roman government for the disposal of his body. His body was even protected against unnecessary mutilation, and the body in which Jesus as-

cended into heaven was the body that was organized in the living body of his mother.

22. But "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" that is, cannot evolve a spiritual body from the present natural body. So, at the "last day," "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed. But from all the examples furnished,—those of Jesus, Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the widow of Nain's son—we have reason to infer that there will be no dead at the last day except in well-preserved bodies.

23. Hence the necessity for all the dead whose bodies have decayed to be born again. God's power is unlimited, but his method of forming a human body is to place a seed with a soul in it in a matrix formed for the purpose, and there let soul and body grow together. We shall therefore get our resurection body just as we got our present body,—not from the dust of the dead, but from the loins of the living; not from the tomb, but from the womb.

24. Our living again after death will be as much a matter of natural law as was our birth into our present life. To suppose that this was by virtue of a special decree on the part of the Creator for every individual now living on the earth is to make him not only set aside natural law, but in some cases to violate moral law, for some now on the earth were born out of wedlock, some in polygamy, and some by means of incest.

25. Gestation is as strictly a matter of natural law as is digestion. During the present regime of life in the natural body the possession or lack of a personal knowledge of God has no more to do with one's chances to live again after death, than it has to do with the digestion of the food which sustains one's life from birth till death.

26. An individual lives again after death by being born again, and he is born again by virtue of having during his life maintained sympathetic connections with his race. By deeds of kindness and mercy to his fellows, even on a small scale, he maintains this sympathetic connection and comes under the operation of a law as unfailing as gravitation, which draws back the soul-seed of the dead man into the warm life-currents of the living race, and so assures his being born again.

27. A selfish life will sever this sympathetic connection with one's race, and render it impossible for the one living such a life to be born again after death. Hence the utterly selfish will be forever left in a bodiless condition in "outer darkness" and be forever lost.

28. The danger of being lost, therefore, arises more immediately from sins against man than sins against God, as far as this distinction is possible. Hence the warnings of Jesus against the selfishness and covetousness of the rich, his exhortations to deeds of love and mercy, to "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they [these friends] may receive you into everlasting habitations,"—that is, thus maintain sympathetic connections with the living race, and so be born again and again till finally attaining an "eternal tabernacle" (R. V.), a spiritual body.

29. Thus does the judgment always follow death. By this law of sympathetic connections is one judged as to whether or not he will ever be born again. If he has visited the sick and otherwise helped the needy, he is drawn back and lives again, and this will go on till he becomes spiritual enough to be above dying. Those who have neglected to do these kindnesses go away into "everlasting punishment,"—do not live again. We live again, therefore, because of pity more than because of piety.

30. Since no individual is wholly saved till he quits dying, there is no hope of individual salvation apart from race salvation. In this sense, all who die die unsaved.

31. This race redemption from death is to come through a purification of our common hereditary stream. Hence the importance given in the Bible to a scheme of blood salvation. The perfection of the race on earth is to come by getting all its members so well born they will not need to die or be born any more. This is what Jesus called "The Regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28; Mark x. 29, 30); Greek *Palingenesis,* meaning, literally, "the born-again era."

32. Living again in this way cannot properly be termed a reincarnation, since we have no evidence that death effects a disincarnation,—that is, a separation of the intelligent personality from its material organism.

So far the author. Readers who wish to learn more of this very interesting work should send a dollar to Messrs. A. C. McClurg and Co., 215-221 Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

THREE GODS OF MAN.

Who could live, who could breathe, if the heart of Being were not Joy?—UPANISHADS.

It is a shallow age, this century of ours: a bushel of words to a grain of thought, and that no such deep one, after all. How well we know how to look down on other times, and point to our own superiorities, as the living dog to the lion dead.

Hear us talk of how other men worshipped God, dissecting their souls to adorn our pages; making the ignominy of some old divinity our academic ornament. These and those savages, we say, bowed down to sticks and stones; while those others were deluded into reverencing some sacred hill, and one pitiable tribe thought there was something divine in storm and sunshine, or even in the earth's green mantle and the forest trees. And so we, who have never known an hour of honest reverence in our lives, make a mock of these dead men, who must have been low indeed were they not better than ourselves; and so we find in faded faiths, as in all things else, a confirmation for our favourite mood of self-congratulation. We are the people, and wisdom will die with us—it is to be hoped, at least, that that kind of wisdom will.

If we were just a little less self-satisfied, and were disposed to see a little deeper into these things, we might come to learn that there have been many faiths upon the earth, though but one Faith; and that among them all, the lowest, basest, and least honourable to our humanity is the faith we ourselves practically hold, whatever we may say of our great ideals. We talk of savages and their beliefs, and say: This and this were the errors of primitive man. What the first shining races of our kind did worship, would probably fail to find room within our narrow minds and limp imaginations at all; and even the thought of the worshipping savage often eludes us—and not always because that thought is too low.

We are always ready to take forms and outward masks for realities; to lose sight of thoughts in their expressions. Were it not so, we should have sooner seen that the one thing all of us sincerely worship, whether savage or civilized, is power; whatever outward appearance that power may take. I find it hard to believe that there were any such savages as our books of science tell

us, who worshipped the weather; who really adored rain-clouds and wreaths of mist, the grey of the dawning, and the purple dome over all; they may have delighted in these things, with a sincere gaiety which would be riches to us; but what they worshipped was not that beautiful face of things, smiling or stern, but power, the power of the world underneath it. And their practical aim in life was to keep on the sheltered side of that power; to be where broken rocks fell not, and floods broke not; but, above all, their worship was winged exultation in it all, such as we ourselves felt in those young years when we lived over again our own days of long ago.

And when, by what we call a progress, though we might well call it a fall, men came to dwell in cities, and no more in the wide, free air; when they learnt the arts of putting into other things the powers they should have kept within themselves, they still worshipped power, but no longer in the same exultant and clear-eyed way. All their arts and dwellings were so many contrivances to keep away and outwit the power of the world; they built walls between them and the sun and wind; they shut out nature, in order to discover man.

Then they began to worship their second god; and the reality of it, whatever its name, was the power of man. For the earlier stages of these worshippers the tribe or race or clan was the whole of man; all, at least, that they could get within their sympathies. And everyone outside the tribe was the enemy; something to be guarded against, as they had guarded formerly against flood and storm, falling rocks and inundations. Each man no longer lived for himself in nature, but for the tribe, the race, the whole of mankind whom he could understand and feel for; so much of universal brotherhood as his imagination could permit. And, had the world run smoothly, we should have come, along that path, to a true universal brotherhood; a happy family of man upon this earth. But things did not run smoothly, and there is little prospect that they will for some time yet. For mankind, that is to say, we ourselves, fell from that not ungracious social religion to one of individualism; where each man worships his amiable self. That god of self-complacency I will not include among the three divinities, though he has, indeed, received more genuine service and more

rapt devotion than any other in these latter days, and especially in this century of ours; and I suspect that he has still a considerable lease of popularity to run.

Our own self-complacency is the true god of our lives, whether we call our pursuit commerce, or politics, or whatever it be; and the same cynical divinity is not quite unwont to wear such revered masks as science or art. There are men, in these latter days, who love truth and beauty for love of beauty and truth; there are also some who love these things for the sake of names on title-pages, and for a place in the catalogues of the devotees of the pure sublime. And the follower of wealth may exist, though we have not so far found great reason to believe it, who prosecutes his task from a sheer and disinterested love of the precious metals and their admired molecular structure, capacity of reflecting light, hardness, brittleness, and so on. But, on the other hand, we do know, and sincerely believe in, the seeker for wealth who lays himself out from the beginning to capture his own genuine admiration—and finds the task a harder one than he imagined. He gathers stocks and shares not for love of them; he builds him houses, not as an offering to the arts of form; he founds a family, not from sheer affection for young human animals; but indeed does all these things that he may say: I am Somewhat! I indeed am a Man!

The poets have given up the theme of love-making, in these our self-conscious days, so I may say, without fear of incurring their displeasure, that even love-making itself is not so free from that god, self-complacency, and his worship, as one might wish to believe. It is sardonic to say: but two young people, gazing into each other's eyes, see the image there, not of the beloved, but of themselves. It is so nice to feel that one is nice enough to be the chosen of so nice a person. There is wisdom in the saying that such and such a maiden has won an admirer, rather than a lover. And I do not believe that the use of the looking-glass is confined to one sex; in this, at least, the gods are good.

Well, after a while people grow weary of this, and cry themselves out of it, saying they are very miserable. They are, in many senses, still one would rather see them laugh themselves into wisdom. It would be more likely to last. Then they may come, in a

happy mood, to worship the last and highest of the powers: the power of life, of the eternal.

That august divinity it was that stood behind the first of our three gods, the power of the world; and it was the joy, lying at the heart of that, that kindled delight in the rainbow's jewels, the shining feathers of the sun, as he scatters the soft clouds; it was that joy that made our life in nature glad and strong, and death even an exultant thing, with a heart of joy. And in our stiffer and more stilted city life there was a gladness too; the honour of the tribe, the service of our land, were good and pleasant things; though never, I think, full of such self-abandonment of bliss as the naked savage could draw from the cool wave breaking over him, or the keen wind around his body. These earliest days were the days of our delight.

We, who have made all things sentimental, are ever ready to sympathize with the hardships of the wild, open-air dweller, the fighting patriot, the servant of his land; I think it is safer for us, the sympathizers, that these robust folk are dead, else, I suspect, they might resent our tears. We are so certain that we ourselves are miserable—and this, as I have said, with justest cause—that we cannot believe but that others were poor apologetic people too, sad while they lived, and sorry when they died.

The end comes, even of our misery, and we pass under the third and greatest of the gods—the power of the eternal.

INDIAN CHRONOLOGY.

"It holds through all literature, that our best history is still poetry. It is so in Hebrew, in Sanskrit, and in in Greek."—EMERSON.

A curious chapter of the fallibility of human reason might be written on the study of ancient Indian Chronology in Europe dur ing the last century. At this day it is almost as difficult for us to look at Indian Chronology, and the history of the ancient world in general, from the standpoint of only a hundred years ago, as it would have been for the grandsons of the Patriarch Noah to look back to the long, careless days before the Flood, when the water had not begun to rain upon the earth. Between us and the first European scholars who laid the foundation of Indian Chronology is a gap wider than the Deluge—a flood of knowledge and insight the like of which no single century has ever seen. It is curious, indeed almost grotesque, to look back to the pages of the first students of Sanskrit,—Colebrooke, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Colonel Wilford, and Colonel Tod,—to see the absolute trust —a trust which no doubt had ever touched—with which they constantly recur to the figures 4004 B. C. as the unquestionable and unquestioned limit of the age of the world and man. It is difficult for us to realise the absolute authoritative character which these figures once held in the minds of the whole of Europe, adopted as they were from the traditions of the Hebrew Rabbis, who had derived them, whether rightly or wrongly, from the Hebrew sacred books. It would be an interesting study to trace the gradual growth of these universally accepted figures for the beginning of all things, 4004 B. C., and to follow the steps by which, from being a mere deductive hypothesis, drawn from the Hebrew books, they little by little crept under the ægis of authority, and came in time to share the unquestioned acceptation of the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. But to do so would demand too much time and research for the purposes of this article. It need only be repeated that a century—I might almost say half a century—ago, they met with an acceptation almost as unquestioned and universal as the multiplication table, or the number of hours in the day,

It is easy to see what effect this acceptation would have on the

minds of all students of ancient history and chronology; how it would fetter the imagination, destroy the conception of gradual growth through long ages, and absolutely incapacitate the minds which accepted it from duly weighing the evidence for any antiquity which went beyond that period, or even approached too nearly to the limit which had been set up as the utmost age of man and the world. I need not prove the reality of this warping influence by citations from the pages of Sir William Jones, and Colebrooke, and Colonel Tod, nor from the early volumes of the Asiatic Researches; the fact is too well known, and too evident to require any proof beyond mere statement. It happened, therefore, that when the Sanskrit scriptures, the Vedas, the Epics, the Puranas, were first given to the West, through the labours of this famous band of workers, the whole world of European thought was under the yoke of the Rabbinical Chronology of 4004 B. C. Now, many of the epochs of Indian History stretch back for thousands of years, the central point of all Indian Epic and tradition, the Mahabharata, or Great War, being dated almost exactly 5,000 years ago; while behind the Mahabharata War stretches a vast perspective; the ages of the Vedas, their Brahmanas, and Upanishads; and even behind the Vedas, beyond the Rig-Veda's earliest hymns, lie untold ages of Indian's past, till that distant day, hidden in the mists of time, when the Aryan first descended from the Himalayan snows. Besides these traditional dates, we have a vast system of greater and lesser ages, of cycles within cycles, stretching back for hundreds of thousands, and even millions of years, which form a distinctive feature in the Puranic epoch, and which, more than anything else, have proved unpalatable to European students of Sanskrit thought.

It happened, therefore, when the pioneers of European Sanskrit study came upon these traditions of the Mahabharata War, the Ramayana behind that, and the vast Vedic space beyond the Ramayana; when they came upon the system of ages and cycles in the Puranas, with their hundreds of thousands, and even millions of years; that these scholars—into whose heads it never entered to doubt the absolute certainty of the date 4004 B. C. for the creation of the world; into whose heads it never entered to doubt the absolute certainty of the date 2349 B. C. for the Universal Deluge—had only two alternatives in dealing with the dates of Indian his-

tory and tradition,—either to discard the dates while accepting the reality of the events recorded, or to deny both together, and, labelling event and date as grotesque Brahmanical exaggeration, to consign them at once to the limbo of exploded fallacies. The former fate befell the tradition of the Mahabharata War, and the wanderings of Rama; the latter, the whole system of ages and cycles in the Puranas. The universally accepted eras of India, the dates that had been handed down from generation to generation, were summoned before the bar of Hebrew Rabbinical tradition, before the bar of Archbishop Ussher's chronology, and condemned. It became an aphorism with our early Sanskrit students that all Indian dates must be cut down to the Rabbinical level; must be distrusted and discarded as exaggerations; and from this wholesale distrust of Indian historical tradition sprang another aphorism, that "India has no history." The practical result of this was, that the utmost limit assignable to the oldest Sanskrit works, the *terminus a quo* of Sanskrit literature, was fixed at some 2000 B. C., just this side of Noah's Flood. As this seemed too old to many early students, the date of 1500 B. C. became generally accepted as the *terminus a quo* of Sanskrit literature. Then followed another conclusion,—that, as the Rig Veda, dated, as we have seen, about 1800 B. C. or later, was deemed to be the first outburst of song of the Aryans descending upon the plains of India, it followed that the Aryans must have entered India not long before this date; so that the period of a millenium and a half before the Christian era became gradually accepted as a certain and well ascertained period, at which, and not before, the Aryan invaders must have begun their gradual subjugation of the aboriginal tribes.

I suppose that, writing so many years after the deluge of thought and insight I have referred to, I need not insist on the fact that the year 4004 B. C. can no longer be accepted as the absolute beginning of the world and man; can no longer be considered as the fixed and certain boundary within which all human growth and development must have taken place. Perhaps the latest opinion on the age of the world, and one which represents broadly the conclusion of all thinking people at the present day is that of Sir A. Geikie, who, speaking before the British Association, concluded that the hundred thousand feet of the earth's crust have been laid

down in a period of from seventy-three million to six hundred and eighty million years. Of course, behind this lie the vast ages while the earth was cooling, before sedimentation began; and the vaster ages that saw the primal fire mist condensed into rings; the rings broken and closing up to become cloud-globes, and the cloud-globes worlds. How many ages were needed to form a fire-mist? How many to form the early space-breaths from which it sprang? To answer these is to step into the pathless halls of infinity. It is clear, therefore, that we are dealing with periods which, in sober earnest, dwarf into inferiority the widest span of the Puranic ages and cycles; which are vastly broader and more comprehensive than the longest sweep of the *Yugas* that earned for the old Indian writers, from our earliest Sanskrit students, a sweeping condemnation for grossest mendacity and exaggeration. In the face of statements like that of the famous geologist, Sir A. Geikie, giving the mere crust of the earth an age of from seventy-three to six hundred and eighty millions of years; in the face of the far longer periods claimed by the astronomers, who take up the thread where the geologist lays it down, can we any longer venture to overlook the fact that, while only a century ago the whole of the Western World was cramped within the four milleniums before the Christian era for the utmost limit of the world; the ancient philosophers of India had attained far truer ideas of the vast ages of time, and had assigned to the world an antiquity far more nearly approaching the truth than that which still fettered their critics, the early Sanskrit scholars at the beginning of last century?

Then as to the age of man; it is so well known that I need hardly repeat it, that the certain traces of man, bones, implements, pictures, have been found in geological strata of the Pleistocene age. Now, taking the thickness of the strata formed since that period, and comparing it with the total hundred thousand feet of the earth's crust, we should have for the proved and unassailable antiquity of man a period of from seven hundred and thirty thousand years to six million eight hundred thousand years,—as we accept the longer or shorter period put forward by Sir A. Geikie—as the *minimum* limit of man's existence on the earth. Now, the skulls which belong to the very earliest human remains are as large as, if not larger than, the general average at the present day; that we stand

in the presence of a fully formed man, a skilled hunter, and an artist of admirable power, at a period that cannot possibly be less than about a million years ago, and may quite possibly be six million, and more. But the biologists claim even longer periods than the geologists. Professor Huxley puts the beginning of sedimentation at a thousand million years ago; and this, proceeding on the same proportions, would give for the fully formed and perfectly developed man of the Pleistocene period an antiquity of something like ten million years.

Here is a very different *terminus a quo* from 4004 B. C. of the last generation; which held absolutely canonical authority when the first Sanskrit scholars became acquainted with the tradition of India; in obedience to which authority these traditions were cut down and crushed forward with such force as to bring the period of classical Sanskrit down to the very verge of the Mussulman conquest of India. The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that the foundations of Indian chronology, as understood in the West, were laid under an absolutely false idea of the age of man and of the world; that all subsequent conjectures of the European schools of Sanskrit students have been built upon these foundations; and therefore that all conclusions based on the major premiss of 4004 B. C. for the creation of man are necessarily vitiated from beginning to end. The whole edifice of Indian Chronology, as accepted in Europe, was built on a false foundation of Rabbinical conjecture, and, as a necessary result, the whole pile will need to be erected again on the firm ground of scientific truth. It is evident that a true scientific method demands, not that we should fix an arbitrary maximum limit, an arbitrarily decided *terminus a quo*, and then make our chronology fit in with it as best we may, by lopping off centuries, and crushing ages into years; but by beginning with the present, and reasoning slowly back to the past. A splendid beginning has been made in this direction by the labours of distinguished scholars in Bombay, with the result that the last great milestone of Indian Chronology, the Vikramaditya, or Samvat era, and the period of Sanskrit literature which it marks, have been driven back from the verge of the Mussulman invasion, to which the pressure of Rabbinical tradition had forced them, and have been firmly settled outside

the limits of our era, where ancient Indian tradition had always held them to be.

The reaction in thought has begun to make itself felt; the magnificent discoveries in the history of man and of the world, which mark the middle of last century, have begun to take effect on our understanding of Indian antiquity; and it may be confidently predicted that, within a few years, other cardinal points and milestones of Indian History will follow the example of Vikramaditya and be gradually reinstated in their ancient limits, where the universal voice of Indian tradition placed them ages ago. A proof of this is already present in the admirable work of a learned scholar in Madras, who, discussing the connection between Babylonia and Old India, takes up a line of argument which, if logically followed, would place the whole of Vedic literature which precedes the legend of Manu's deluge at a period anterior to the Noachian Flood, which Archbishop Ussher's chronology assigns to the year 2348 B. C. The reconstruction of Indian traditional chronology on true scientific lines has begun; and it is certain that it will soon be released, once for all, from the fetters of Rabbinical tradition, and placed on a firm ground of scientific truth.

A SERMON

BY A RUSSIAN DIVINE.

Again I stand on the threshold of another year. Again I stand on the crest of a mountain, where I may make a halt and review, before I walk again the path I have trod. I shall halt, I shall rest, I shall hush my troubled heart, be it only for this short moment, I shall hide from the blizzard, which had followed me ever since I set out, and will meet me again the moment I leave my seclusion. Oh, Lord! help me calmly to examine my soul and Thy creation.

I gaze at God's creation, at everything which He has sent to me, which has been placed close to me, which, through His will, has come together in my life, and with my hand on my heart, from the depth of my heart and conscience, I say: All this is very good! Yonder is my happy childhood—how brightly it shines, diffusing its aroma from the distant long ago, how it lights up my path before me, how it freshens my soul, during spells of exhaustion! Yonder is my ardent youth and with it all that brought to my soul the first raptures of feeling. Here are my lessons, my joys, my bitter losses, here are the people to live with whom is my happiness, here are others, whom, hardly conscious with grief, I have buried in the damp earth; here are all, surrounded by whom I grew up, with whom I have received gifts of love and of wrath, from whom have I accepted honour and dishonour; here is Nature, which, at times, appeared to me more alive and more responsive, which had more power to energize my spirit, than living beings themselves; here are my pleasures, my connections, my illnesses. All, all this is very good. All was good, that God's Providence sent into my life. Nothing was in vain. Everything was for good.

My past! How far it stretches back in the wondrous country, whence come to me a glad sound, or a beloved image, consolation, and hope, and bitter remorse. I gaze at it and I smile for joy. I gaze at it and I cover my face with my hands for shame. Yet I know: it is mine, it is myself, it is a part of my life, and no power can take it from me or erase what is written in it. And that which is written in it is the future, it is the fate of man. Many are the lives in it, whose mysterious meaning will be disclosed at some future time, at the time when the seed that was sown, will come

to ripeness, when, in letters of fire, it will bring forward the word, traced on it by eternal wisdom, unrevealed as yet to mind and conscience, but not to be separated from life. Whilst man lived his days, whilst he worked and slept, whilst he laughed and cried, whilst he moved and rested—eternal Wisdom traced this word on his life and sealed it with a seal of its own, putting a magic spell on it, until the time comes for the seal to be broken, and for a dark corner of a man's life to be lit up by the light of God's understanding, which lies hidden in life. It is an agony to read some of these words, but once you have read them, your heart will know, that those are words of God's love, of God's solicitude for man. And with every new word, a mystery is revealed, a veil is drawn away and man is made able to understand the thoughts and longings of his own heart.

All is very good. Yet, even now, my restless heart is throbing with unknown longing and straining to see into the distant future.

Oh, Lord! let Thy blessing rest on us.

TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS

IN THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SENSE

Greeting!

"The Theosophical Forum" recently published a Notice, addressed to the authors of many unwritten articles, among its readers, praying them to get the said articles written down and sent to us. This request brought such good results, in the form of certain excellent contributions by quite new writers, that we are impelled to repeat our invitation. Good friends, no longer hide your talents in the napkin of the unmanifested, but precipitate them on paper, and give them to waiting humanity, through our pages. Be encouraged to tread in the path of the Sages who have gone before you! Let your inward revelations take body in the written word! Modesty is a beautiful virtue; so also is courage. Show that you are wise, by letting this word suffice.

Now to address our contributors in the material sense: "The Theosophical Forum" with every year grows firmer on its foundation, more able to stand alone. Its independent life grows and developes. A new milestone in its journey is passed, with this number. From henceforth, all subscriptions and donations are to be sent *to the Editor direct,* and no longer to four or five different addresses, in different cities. We hope soon to bring all subscriptions up to date, and, where subscribers have sent their contributions in the middle of a volume, we hope to send them notices asking for a supplementary subscription to carry their subscription forward to the beginning of a new volume. There are a good many among our readers whose subscriptions, like the articles alluded to above, still dwell in the unmanifested; these we shall ask to precipitate, to materialise. To all and sundry, we make the request that contributions, subscriptions, communications and sendings of whatever nature may in future be addressed to us direct; money being remitted by postal orders, payable to

The Editor,

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM,

Flushing, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Founded by H. P. BLAVATSKY at New York in 1875.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

There are no dues.

The expenses of the Theosophical Society in America are met by voluntary contributions, which should be sent to A. H. Spencer, Treasurer T. S. in A., Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S. A., P. O. Box 1584, New York.